[CHEAP REPOSITORY. Number 16.]

BLACK GILES the poacher;

WITH THE

History of Widow Brown's Apple-Tree.

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BLACK GILES, &c.

I THINK my readers got ſo well acquainted laſt week with Black Giles the Poacher, that they will not expect, this week, to hear any great good, either of Giles himſelf, his wife Rachel, or any of their family. I am ſorry to expoſe their tricks, but it is their fault, not mine. If I pretend to ſpeak about people at all, I muſt tell the truth. I am ſure, if folks would but turn about and mend, it would be a thouſand times pleaſanter to me to write their hiſtories; for it is no comfort to tell of any body's faults. If the world

would but grow good, I ſhould be glad enough to tell of it; but till it really becomes ſo, I muſt go on deſcribing it as it is; otherwiſe, I ſhould only miſlead my readers, inſtead of inſtructing them. It is the duty of a faithful hiſtorian to relate the evil with the good.

As to Giles and his boys, I am ſure old Widow Brown has good reaſon to remember their dexterity. Poor Woman! ſhe had a fine little bed of onions, in her neat and well kept garden; ſhe was very fond of her onions, and many a rheumatiſm has ſhe caught by kneeling down to weed them in a damp day, notwithſtanding the little flannel cloak and the bit of an old mat which Madam Wilſon gave her, becauſe the old woman would needs weed in wet weather. Her onions ſhe always

carefully treaſured up for her winter's ſtore; for an onion makes a little broth very reliſhing, and is indeed the only ſavoury thing poor people are uſed to get. She had alſo a ſmall orchard, containing about a dozen apple-trees, with which in a good year ſhe has been known to make a couple of barrels of cider, which ſhe ſold to her landlord towards paying her rent, beſides having a little keg which ſhe was able to keep back for her own drinking. Well! would you believe it, Giles and his boys marked both onions and apples for their own; indeed, a man who ſtole ſo many rabbits from the warren, was likely enough to ſteal onions for ſauce. One day, when the widow was abroad on a little buſineſs, Giles and his boys made a clear riddance of the onion bed; and when they had pulled up every ſingle onion, they then

turned a couple of pigs into the garden, allured by the ſmell, tore up the bed in ſuch manner, that the widow, when ſhe came home, had not the leaſt doubt but the pigs had been the thieves. To confirm this opinion, they took care to leave the little hatch half open at one end of the garden, and to break down a bit of a fence at the other end.

I wonder how any body can find in his heart not to pity and reſpect poor old widows! There is ſomething ſo forlorn and helpleſs in their condition, that methinks it is a call on every body, men, women, and children, to do them all the kind ſervices that fall in their way. Surely their having no one to take their part, is an additional reaſon for kind-hearted people not to hurt and oppreſs them. But it was this very reaſon

which led Giles to do this woman an hurt.

It happened unluckily for this poor widow that her cottage ſtood quite alone. On ſeveral mornings together (for roguery gets up much earlier than induſtry) Giles and his boys ſtole regularly into her orchard, followed by their Jack-aſſes. She was ſo deaf that ſhe could not hear the aſſes if they had brayed ever ſo loud, and to this Giles truſted; for he was very cautious in his rogueries; ſince he could not otherwiſe have contrived to keep out of priſon; for though he was almoſt always ſuſpected, he had ſeldom been taken up, and never convicted. The boys uſed to fill their bags, load their aſſes, and then march off; and if in their way to the town where the apples were to be ſold, they chanced to paſs by one of their

neighbours who might be likely to ſuſpect them, they then all at once began to ſcream out, "buy my coal!—buy my ſand!"

Beſides the trees in her orchard, poor widow Brown had in her ſmall garden one Apple-tree particularly fine; it was a Redſtreak, ſo tempting and ſo lovely, that Giles's family had watched it with longing eyes, till at laſt they reſolved on a plan for carrying off all this fine fruit in their bags. But it was a nice point to manage. The Tree ſtood directly under her chamber-window, ſo that there was ſome danger that ſhe might ſpy them at the work. They therefore determined to wait till the next Sunday morning, when they knew ſhe would not fail to be at church. Sunday came, and during ſervice Giles

attended. It was a lone houſe, as I ſaid before, and the reſt of the pariſh were ſafe at church. In a trice the tree was cleared, the bags were filled, the aſſes were whipt, the thieves were off, the coaſt was clear, and all was ſafe and quiet by the time the ſermon was over.

Unluckily, however, it happened, that this tree was ſo beautiful, and the fruit ſo fine, that the people, as they uſed to paſs to and from church, were very apt to ſtop and admire Widow Brown's Redſtreak; and ſome of the farmers rather envied her that in that ſcarce ſeaſon, when *they* hardly expected to make a pye out of a large orchard, ſhe was likely to make cider from a ſingle tree, I am afraid, indeed, if I muſt ſpeak out, ſhe herſelf rather ſet her heart too much upon this tree, and had felt as much pride

as gratitude to a good providence for it; but this failing of her's was no excuſe for Giles. The covetouſneſs of this thief had for once got the better of his caution; the tree was too completely ſtripped, though the youngeſt boy Dick did beg hard that his father would leave the poor old woman enough for a few dumplings, and when Giles ordered Dick in his turn to ſhake the tree, the boy did it ſo gently that hardly any apples fell, for which he got a good ſhake of the ſtick with which the old man was beating down the apples.

The neighbours on their return from church ſtopped as uſual, but it was—not, alas! to admire the apples, for apples there was none left, but to lament the robbery, and conſole the widow; mean time the Redſtreaks were ſafely lodged in Giles's hovel under a few bundles of hay which he

had contrived to pull from the farmers mow the night before, for the uſe of his jack aſſes. Such a ſtir, however, began to be made about the widow's apple-tree, that Giles, who knew how much his character laid him open to ſuſpicion, as ſoon as he ſaw the people ſafe in church again in the afternoon, ordered his boys to carry each a hatful of the apples and thruſt them in at a little caſement window which happened to be open in the houſe of Samuel Price, a very honeſt carpenter in that pariſh, who was at church with his whole family. Giles's plan, by this contrivance, was to lay the theft on Price's ſons in caſe the thing ſhould come to be further enquired into. Here Dick put in a word, and begged and prayed his father not to force them to carry the apples to Price's. But all that he got by his begging was ſuch a knock as had nearly laid

him on the earth. "What, you cowardly raſcal," ſaid Giles, "you will go and peach I ſuppoſe, and get your father ſent to goal."

Poor widow Brown, though her trouble had made her ſtill weaker than ſhe was, went to church again in the afternoon; indeed ſhe rightly thought that trouble was a new reaſon why ſhe ought to go. During the ſervice ſhe tried with all her might not to think of her Redſtreaks, and whenever they would come into her head ſhe took up her prayer book directly, and ſo ſhe forgot them a little, and indeed ſhe found herſelf much eaſier when ſhe came out of the church than when ſhe went in. Now it happened oddly enough, that on that Sunday, of all the Sundays in the year, ſhe, ſhould call in to reſt a little at Samuel Price's, to tell over again the

lamentable ſtory of the apples, and to conſult with him how the thief might be brought to juſtice. But, O reader! gueſs if you can, for I am ſure I cannot tell you, what was her ſurprize, when on going into Samuel Price's kitchen ſhe ſaw her own Redſtreaks lying in the window! The apples were of a ſort too remarkable for colour, ſhape, and ſize to be miſtaken. There was not ſuch another tree in the pariſh. Widow Brown immediately ſcreamed out, "laſs-a-day! as ſure as can be here are my Redſtreaks; I could ſwear to them in any court." Samuel Price, who believed his ſons to be as honeſt as himſelf, was ſhocked and troubled at the ſight. He knew he had no Redſtreaks of his own; he knew there were no apples in the window when he went to church. He did verily believe them to be the widow's. But how they came there

he could not poſſibly gueſs. He called for Tom, the only one of his ſons who now lived at home. Tom was at the Sunday ſchool, which he had never once miſſed ſince Mr. Wilſon the Miniſter had ſet one up in the pariſh. Was ſuch a boy likely to do ſuch a deed?

A crowd was by this time got about Price's door, among which was Giles and his boys, who had already taken care to ſpread the news that Tom Price was the thief. Moſt people were unwilling to believe it. His character was very good, but appearances were ſtrongly againſt him. Mr. Wilſon, who had ſtaid to chriſten a child, now came in. He was much concerned that Tom Price, the beſt boy in his ſchool, ſhould ſtand accuſed of ſuch a crime. He ſent for the boy, examined, and croſs ex-

amined him. No marks of guilt appeared. But ſtill though he pleaded *not guilty*, there lay the Redſtreaks in his father's window. All the idle fellows in the place, who were likely to have committed ſuch a theft themſelves, fell with great vengeance on poor Tom. The wicked ſeldom give any quarter. "This is one of your ſanctified ones!" cried they. "This was all the good that Sunday ſchools did! for their parts they never ſaw any good come by religion. Sunday was the only day for a little paſtime, and if poor boys muſt be ſhut up with their godly books when they ought to be out taking a little pleaſure, it was no wonder they made themſelves amends by ſuch tricks. Another ſaid, he ſhould like to ſee parſon Wilſon's righteous one well whipped. A third hoped he would be clapped in the ſtocks for a young hypocrite as he

was, while old Giles, who thought to avoid ſuſpicion by being more violent than the reſt, declared, " that he hoped the young dog would be tranſported for life."

Mr. Wilſon was too wiſe and too juſt to proceed againſt Tom without full proof. He declared the crime was a very heavy one, and he feared that heavy muſt be the puniſhment. Tom, who knew his own innocence, earneſtly prayed to God that it might be made to appear as clear as the noonday, and very fervent were his ſecret devotions on that night.

Black Giles paſſed his night in a very different manner. He ſet off as ſoon as it was dark with his ſons and their jack-aſſes laden with their ſtolen goods. As ſuch a cry was raiſed about the apples he did not think it

afe to keep them longer at home, ut reſolved to go and ſell them at he next town; borrowing without ave a lame colt out of the moor to ſſiſt in carrying off his booty.

Giles and his eldeſt ſons had rare ſport all the way in thinking, that while they were enjoying the profit of their plunder, Tom Price would be whipped round the market place at leaſt, if not ſent beyond ſea. But the younger boy Dick, who had naturally a tender heart, though hardened by his long familiarity with ſin, could not help crying when he thought that Tom Price might perhaps be tranſported for a crime which he himſelf had helped to commit. He had had no compunction about the robbery, for he had not been inſtructed in the great principles of truth and juſtice. Nor would he therefore, perhaps have had

much remorſe about accuſing an innocent boy. But though utterly devoid of principle he had ſome remains of natural feeling and of gratitude. Tom Price had often given him a bit of his own bread and cheeſe; and once, when Dick was like to be drowned, Tom had jumped into the pond with his cloaths on, and ſaved his life when he was juſt ſinking: the remembrance of all this made his heart heavy. He ſaid nothing: as he trotted bare foot after the aſſes, he heard his father and brothers laugh at having outwitted the godly ones; and he grieved to think how poor Tom would ſuffer for his wickedneſs, yet fear kept him ſilent; they called him ſulky dog, and laſhed the aſſes till they bled.

In the mean time Tom Price kept up his ſpirits as well as he could. He worked hard all day, and

prayed heartily night and morning. "It is true," ſaid he to himſelf, "I am not guilty of this ſin; but let this accuſation ſet me on examining myſelf, and truly repenting of all my other ſins, for I find enough to repent of, though I thank God I did not ſteal thoſe apples."

At length Sunday came. Tom went to ſchool as uſual. As ſoon as he walked in there was a deal of whiſpering and laughing among the worſt of the boys; and he over heard them ſay, "Who would have thought it? This is maſter's favourite! This is Parſon Wilſon's ſober Tommy? We ſhan't have Tommy thrown in our teeth again if we go to get a birds neſt, or gather a few nuts of a Sunday." "Your demure ones are always hypocrites," ſays another. "The ſtill ſow ſucks all the milk," ſays a third.

Giles's family had always kept clear of the ſchool. Dick indeed had ſometimes wiſhed to go, not that he had much ſenſe of ſin, or deſire after goodneſs, but he thought if he could once read, he might riſe in the world, and not be forced to drive aſſes all his life. Through this whole Saturday night he could not ſleep. He longed to know what would be done to Tom. He wiſhed to go to ſchool, but he had not courage; ſin is very cowardly; ſo on the Sunday morning he went and ſat himſelf down under the church wall. Mr. Wilſon paſſed by. It was not his way to reject the moſt wicked, till he had tried every means to bring them over, and even then he pitied aud prayed for them. He had indeed long left off talking to Giles's ſons; but ſeeing Dick ſitting by himſelf he once more ſpoke to him, to leave off his vagabond life, and

go with him into the ſchool. The boy hung down his head, but made no anſwer. He did not however either riſe up and run away, or look ſulky, as he uſed to do. The Miniſter deſired him once more. "Sir," ſaid the boy, "I can't go; I am ſo big I am aſhamed." "The bigger you are the leſs time you have to loſe." "But, Sir, I can't read." "Then it is high time you ſhould learn." "I ſhould be aſhamed to begin to learn my letters." "The ſhame is not in beginning to learn them, but in being contented never to know them." "But, Sir, I am ſo ragged!" God looks at the heart and not at the coat. "But, Sir, I have no ſhoes and ſtockings." "So much the worſe. I remember who gave you both," (here Dick coloured.) "It is bad to want ſhoes and ſtockings, but ſtill if you can drive your aſſes a dozen miles

without them, you may certainly walk to ſchool without them." "But, Sir, the good boys will hate me, and won't ſpeak to me." Good boys hate nobody, and as to not ſpeaking to you, to be ſure they will not keep you company while you go on in your preſent evil courſes; but as ſoon as they ſee you wiſh to reform, they will help you, and pity you, and teach you, and ſo come along," Here Mr. Wilſon took this dirty boy by the hand, and gently pulled him forward, kindly talking to him all the way.

How the whole ſchool ſtared to ſee Dick Giles come in! no one however dared to ſay what he thought. The buſineſs went on, and Dick ſlunk into a corner, partly to hide his rags and partly to hide his ſin; for laſt Sunday's tranſaction ſat heavy at his heart, not becauſe he had ſtolen the apples, but

becauſe Tom Price had been accuſed. This I ſay, made him ſlink behind. Poor boy! he little thought there was ONE ſaw him who ſees all things, and from whoſe eye no hole nor corner can hide the ſinner.

It was the cuſtom in that ſchool for the maſter who was a good and wiſe man, to mark down in his pocket book all the events of the week, that he might turn them to ſome account in his Sunday evening inſtructions, ſuch as any uſeful ſtory in the newſpaper, any account of boys being drowned as they were out in a pleaſure boat on Sundays; any ſudden death in the pariſh, or any other remarkable viſitation of Providence, inſomuch, that many young people in the place, who did not belong to the ſchool, and many parents alſo, uſed to drop in for an hour on a Sunday evening,

when they were ſure to hear ſomething profitable. The Miniſter greatly approved this practice, and often called in himſelf, which was a great ſupport to the maſter, and encouragement to the people.

The maſter had taken a deep concern in the ſtory of widow Brown's apple-tree. He could not believe Tom Price was guilty, nor dared he pronounce him innocent; but he reſolved to turn the inſtructions of the preſent evening to this ſubject. He began thus; "My dear boys, however light ſome of you may make of robbing an orchard, yet I have often told you there is no ſuch thing as a *little* ſin, if it be wilful or habitual. I wiſh now to explain to you alſo that there is hardly ſuch a thing as a *single* ſolitary ſin. You know I teach you not merely to repeat the com-

mandments as an exercise for your memory, but as a rule for your conduct. If you came here only to learn to read and spell on a Sunday, I should think that was not employing God's day for God's work ; but I teach you to read that you may by this means come to understand the Bible and Catechism, as to make every text in the one, and every question and answer in the other, to be so fixed in your hearts, that they may bring forth the fruits of good living by it.

Master. How many commandments are there.

Boy. Ten.

Master. How many did that boy break who stole the widow Brown's apples ?

Boy. Only one, Master. The eighth.

Master. What is the eighth?

Boy. Thou shalt not steal.

Master. And you are very ſure that this was the only one he broke? Now ſuppoſe I could prove to you that he probably broke not leſs than ſix out of thoſe ten commandments, which the great Lord of heaven himſelf ſtooped down from his eternal glory to deliver to men; would you not then think it a terrible thing to ſteal, whether apples or guineas?

Boy. Yes, Maſter.

Master. I will put the caſe. Some wicked boy has robbed widow Brown's orchard. (Here the eyes of every one were turned on poor Tom Price, except thoſe of Dick Giles, who fixed his on the ground.) I accuſe no one, continued the maſter, Tom Price is a good boy, and was not miſſing at the time of the robbery; theſe are two reaſons why I preſume he is innocent; but whoever it was, you al-

low that by ſtealing thoſe apples he broke the eighth commandment,

Boy. Yes, Maſter.

Master. On what day were theſe apples ſtolen?

Boy. On Sunday.

Master. What is the fourth commandment?

Boy. Thou ſhalt keep holy the Sabbath Day.

Master. Does that perſon keep holy the Sabbath Day who lōiters in an orchard on Sunday, when he ſhould be at church, and ſteals apples when he ought to be ſaying his prayers?

Boy. No, maſter.

Master. What command does he break?

Boy. The fourth.

Master. Suppoſe this boy had parents who had ſent him to church, and that he had diſobeyed them by

not going, would that be keeping the fifth commandment?

Boy. No, maſter; for the fifth commandment ſays, thou ſhalt *honor* thy father and thy mother.

This was the only part of the caſe in which poor Dick Gile's heart did not ſmite him; for he knew that he had diſobeyed no father; for his father, alas! was ſtill wickeder than himſelf, and had brought him to commit the ſin, But what a wretched comfort was this! The maſter went on.

Master. Suppoſe this boy earneſtly coveted this fruit, though it belonged to another perſon, would that be right?

Boy. No, maſter; for the tenth commandment ſays, *Thou ſhalt not covet.*

Master. Very Well. Here are four of God's poſitive commands already broken. Now do you think

thieves ever ſcruple to uſe wicked words?

Boy. I am afraid not, maſter.

Here Dick Giles was not ſo hardened but that he remembered how many curſes had paſſed between him and his fahter while they were filling the bags, and he was afraid to look up. The maſter went on.

"I will now go one ſtep further. If the thief, to all his other ſins has added that of accuſing the innocent to ſave himſelf, if he ſhould break the ninth commandment, by *bearing false witness against a harmless neighbour*, SIX COMMANDMENTS ARE BROKEN FOR AN APPLE! But if it be otherwiſe, if Tom Price ſhould be found guilty, 'tis not his good character ſhall ſave him. I ſhall ſhed tears over him but puniſh him I muſt."—"No that you ſhan't," roar-

ed but Dick Giles, who ſprung from his hiding place, fell on his knees, and burſt out a crying, "Tom Price is as good a boy as ever lived; it was father and I ſtole the apples!"

It would have done your heart good to have ſeen the joy of the maſter, the modeſt bluſhes of Tom Price, and the ſatisfaction of every honeſt boy in the ſchool. All ſhook hands with Tom, and even Dick got ſome portion of pity. I wiſh I had room to give my readers the moving exhortation which the maſter gave. But while Mr. Wilſon left the guilty boy to the management of the maſter, he thought it became him, as a Miniſter and a Magiſtrate, to go to the extent of the law in puniſhing the father. Early on the Monday morning he ſent to apprehend Giles; in the mean time Mr. Wilſon was ſent

for to a gardener's houſe two miles diſtant, to attend a man who was dying. This was a duty to which all other's gave way in his mind. He ſet out directly, but what was his ſurprize on his arrival to ſee, on a little bed on the floor, poaching Giles lying in all the agonies of death! Jack Weſton, the ſame poor young man againſt whom Giles had informed for killing a hare, was kneeling by him, offering him ſome broth, and talking to him in the kindeſt manner. Mr. Wilſon begged to know the meaning of all this, and Jack Weſton ſpoke as follows.

" At four this morning, as I was going out to mow, paſſing under the high wall of this garden I heard a moſt diſmal moaning. The nearer I came the more diſmal it grew. At laſt, who ſhould I ſee but poor Giles

groaning, and ſtruggling under a quantity of bricks and ſtones, but not able to ſtir. The day before he had marked a fine large net on this old wall, and reſolved to ſteal it, for he thought it might do as well to catch patridges as to preſerve cherries; ſo, Sir, ſtanding on the very top of this wall, and tugging to looſen the net from the hooks which faſtened it, down came Giles, net, wall and all, for the wall was gone to decay. It was very high indeed, and poor Giles not only broke his thigh, but has got a terrible blow on his brain, and is bruiſed all over like a mummy. On ſeeing me, Sir, poor Giles cried out, "oh Jack! I did try to ruin thee by lodging that information, and now thou wilt be revenged by letting me lie here and periſh." God forbid, Giles, cried I: thou ſhalt ſee what ſort of revenge a Chriſtian

takes. So, Sir, I ſent off the garden-er's boy to fetch a ſurgeon, while I ſcampered home, and brought on my back this bit of a hammock, which is indeed my own bed, and put Giles upon it, we then lifted him up, bed and all, as tenderly as if he had been a gentleman, and brought him in here. My wife has juſt brought him a cup of nice broth, and now, Sir, as I have done what I could for his poor periſhing body, it was I who took the liberty to ſend for you to come to try to help his poor ſoul, for the Doctor ſays he can't live."

Mr. Wilſon could not help ſaying to himſelf, "Such an action as this is worth a whole volume of com-ments on that precept of our bleſſed Maſter, 'Do good to them that hate you." Giles dying groans con-

firmed the ſad account Weſton had juſt given. The poor wretch could neither pray himſelf, nor attend to the Miniſter. He could only cry out, "Oh, Sir, what will become of me? I don't know how to repent. Oh my poor wicked children! Sir, I have bred them all up in ſin and ignorance. Have mercy on them, Sir; let me not meet them in the place of torment to which I am going." He languiſhed a few days, and died in great miſery.

Except the Miniſter and Jack Weſton, none came to ſee poor Giles, beſides Tommy Price, who had been ſo ſadly wronged by him. Tom often brought him his own rice milk or apple dumpling, and Giles, ignorant and depraved as he was, often cried out, that he thought now there muſt be ſome truth in religion,

ſince it taught even a boy to *deny himself*, and to *forgive an injury*.—Mr. Wilſon the next Sunday made a moving diſcourſe on the danger of what are called "petty offences." This, together with the awful death of Giles, produced ſuch an effect, that no poacher has been able to ſhew his head in that pariſh ever ſince. Z.

FINIS.

☞Next week will be publiſh'd——The Hiſtory of Tawny Rachel the fortune teller:—Black Giles's wife.

TAWNY RACHEL, &c.

TAWNY Rachel was the wife of poaching Giles. There ſeemed to be a conſpiracy in Giles's whole family to maintain themſelves by tricks and pilfering. Regular labour and honeſt induſtry did not ſuit their idle habits. They had a ſort of genius at finding out every unlawful means to ſupport a vagabond life. Rachel travelled the country with a baſket on her arm. She pretended to get her bread by ſelling laces, cabbage nets, ballads and hiſtory books, and to buy old rags and rabbit ſkins. Many honeſt people trade